

Agenda

Ceremonial Planting of First Tree of the Climate-Smart Forest

“How Germany Wants to Overcome the Climate Crisis”

Bärbel Höhn, Special Representative for Energy in Africa on behalf of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Dr. Sabine Engel, University of Minnesota

4 Parallel Small-group Workshops

- How do we get more green electricity?
- How to get better building efficiency?
- How to make transportation cleaner?
- How to use political instruments?

Reconvene for Summaries and Final Comments



The Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation from Minnesota.



Top, Addie, the friendly dog who joined delegation members for the ceremonial planting of the first tree in the Climate-Smart Forest.

Bottom, Madeline K. Lydon (me) at the ceremonial planting of the first tree of the Climate-Smart Forest.

We are in this together

Minnesota and Germany are an ocean apart but face the same challenges

Over the past five days, the members of the Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation have learned, forged new friendships and partnerships and strengthened old ones, and shared ideas and strategies. Information has been exchanged, inspiration has visited each of us, and commitments to creating a sustainable future have been made.

Each of us will soon be returning to our everyday lives, but we will be bringing our experiences in Germany and the knowledge we have gained here with us. One of the things we have all experienced on this delegation is the universality of climate change. Prior to coming to Germany, we all knew on an intellectual level that climate change effects everyone and everywhere on Earth, but in Germany we experienced this truth and now know it on a deeper level. Like Minnesota, Lüdenscheid is experiencing dramatic and devastating changes to precipitation patterns, which destroys property and infrastructure, takes

lives, decimates landscapes, and changes traditions. Like Münster, Minnesota is facing the challenge of keeping people cool and warm in increasingly extreme temperatures.

Every delegation member now knows that we are not alone in being negatively impacted by climate change; but after this trip, each of us also knows we are not the only ones working to make a difference in its trajectory. Like Saerbeck, we can revolutionize our energy and waste systems to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, waste less, and reuse more. Like Münster we can increase emissions free mobility and bring reliable heat to people in winter. Like Lüdenscheid we can center sustainability goals in all city services and bring industry into the renewable revolution. And we don’t have to start from scratch. Our generous partners in Germany are here to help us, because we really are all in this together.



Left, delegation members create new friendships and solidify old ones.

Right, Mayor Kim Norton of Rochester and Bürgermeister Stefan Streit of Tecklenburg forge a new connection.



Inspiration and Aspiration

Bärbel Höhn shares Germany’s strategies for climate action

Today, the members of the Climate Smart Municipalities Delegation were privileged to receive an informative primer on Germany’s progress towards and strategies for achieving its climate goals from Bärbel Höhn, Energy Commissioner for Africa of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and member of the Green party.

Commissioner Höhn touched on many things, but some of the most interesting were the policy strategies Germany has or is pursuing in order to meet its aggressive goals of 65% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, 88% reduction by 2040, and achieving climate neutrality by 2045. She explained that these new targets came from a ruling by the German court that young people were correct in

their assertion that the German government was not moving fast enough to combat climate change and ensure that young people would have a safe.

Here are some generalized highlights, which also summarize the themes of the Delegation:

- Eliminate harmful subsidies.
- Implement a carbon tax.
- Invest in renewable energy.
- Expand transportation and design walkable and bikeable communities.
- Educate the public to raise awareness.
- Build coalitions of citizens, industry, politicians, and regulatory agencies to find solutions.

These are simple things on paper, but we all know that in reality it is often difficult to enact societal, economical, and political change. However, things are already happening in Minnesota, and I think this week has renewed everyone’s conviction to go home and get to work.



Dr. Sabine Engel welcomes and introduces Commissioner Bärbel Höhn.



Delegation members sit amongst an art installation of paper waste from Lüdenschied and listen to Commissioner Bärbel Höhn.

Cultural Fun Fact

Did you know...

It is tradition for the friends and family of the couple to break porcelain the night before a wedding in Germany. The custom, called Polterabend, is thought to bring good luck to the marriage. It may have originated to ward off evil spirits.

Thank you to Elke Wirtz, Office for International Affairs, Europe, and City Partnerships at the City of Münster for telling us about this tradition.



Some beautiful flowers outside the Kiepenkerl restaurant in Münster.

Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!

A very Happy Birthday to Patrice Bailey, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Assistant Commissioner!

We hope you had a great day and wish you a life of happiness and health!

